

1 Bradford F. Englander (Ca. Bar # 122108)  
2 3190 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 300  
3 Falls Church, Virginia 22042  
4 (703) 280-9081  
5 (703) 280-3370 (facsimile)  
6 E-mail: [benglander@wtplaw.com](mailto:benglander@wtplaw.com)

7 Attorneys for the Official Committee of  
8 Unsecured Creditors

9  
10 **UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT**  
11 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**  
12 **SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION**

13 In re: \* Case No.: 11-31376  
14 HOWREY LLP, \* Chapter 11  
15 Debtor. \* Date: April 25, 2013  
16 \* Time: 9:30 a.m. PDT  
17 \* Ctrm: U.S. Bankruptcy Court  
18 230 Pine Street  
19 San Francisco, CA

20 \* \* \* \* \* Judge: Dennis J. Montali

21 **OFFICIAL COMMITTEE OF UNSECURED CREDITORS' JOINDER TO**  
22 **CHAPTER 11 TRUSTEE'S OPPOSITION TO MOTION OF HAYNES AND BOONE, LLP**

23 TO THE HONORABLE DENNIS J. MONTALI:

24 The Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors of Howrey, LLP (the "Committee")  
25 respectfully files this Joinder (the "Joinder") to the *Opposition to Motion of Haynes and Boone,*  
26 *LLP for Order Confirming that the Automatic Stay is Inapplicable or, in the Alternative, Granting*  
27 *Relief from the Automatic Stay* (the "Opposition") filed by Allan B. Diamond, Chapter 11 Trustee  
28 (the "Trustee"). The Committee supports the Trustee's Opposition and joins therein. The  
Committee further opposes the *Motion of Haynes and Boone, LLP for Order Confirming that the*  
*Automatic Stay is Inapplicable or, in the Alternative, Granting Relief from the Automatic Stay* (the  
"Motion") as follows:

1                                   **The Motion is Improper and Untimely Forum Shopping**

2           The Motion filed by Haynes and Boone, LLP (“Haynes and Boone”) is untimely and  
3 constitutes an improper attempt to forum shop. Haynes and Boone undoubtedly knew that the  
4 former partners of Howrey and their successor firms would be subject to claims for unfinished  
5 business and that such claims would be a central issue of the firm’s dissolution when it hired  
6 former Howrey partner Richard Ripley (“Mr. Ripley”) on March 16, 2011. The former partners  
7 recognized this risk and tried to avoid liability for unfinished business claims by adopting an  
8 amendment to Howrey’s partnership agreement waiving Howrey’s right to the profits from any  
9 unfinished business (the “Jewel Waiver”) on March 9, 2011, the same day that the partnership  
10 voted to dissolve. *See* Dkt. No. 1087, at 5:9-15. As a Level II equity partner entitled to vote on  
11 the Jewel Waiver, Mr. Ripley clearly was aware that claims for unfinished business would be  
12 asserted. As a sophisticated national firm, Haynes and Boone undoubtedly knew when it hired  
13 Mr. Ripley that unfinished business claims would be pursued.

14           Mr. Ripley and Haynes and Boone had the opportunity to challenge the venue of this case  
15 in May 2011 when Howrey (then controlled by its former partners) filed its *Motion to Dismiss*  
16 *Involuntary Petition or, in the Alternative, to Transfer Venue*. *See* Dkt. No. 13. Those very same  
17 former partners ultimately acquiesced in the case remaining in the Northern District of California.  
18 Mr. Ripley and Haynes and Boone did not press the transfer of venue, and the case has progressed  
19 in this district for more than two years. There is no cause to fracture this case by authorizing  
20 litigation of a central issue in another jurisdiction.

21                                   **Granting the Motion will Create Costly Multi-Jurisdictional**  
22                                   **Litigation and Frustrate the Bankruptcy Process**

23           Granting Haynes and Boone’s Motion would result in time consuming and costly multi-  
24 jurisdictional litigation. Haynes and Boone suggests that because the Howrey partnership  
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1 agreement yields to any contrary provision in an “applicable Code of Professional Responsibility,”  
2 the Bankruptcy Court should permit to the District of Columbia Superior Court to determine  
3 whether the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct permit Mr. Ripley to retain profits derived from  
4 unfinished business of Howrey. *See* Dkt. No. 1087, at 13:4-11, 14:12-19. While Haynes and  
5 Boone only seeks to litigate in the District of Columbia, other firms with partners who are  
6 governed by the ethics rules of other states could seize on the same arguments and seek to have the  
7 matters adjudicated in their own venues.  
8

9  
10 Haynes and Boone can offer no assurance that the matter will proceed promptly in the  
11 District of Columbia, much less in multiple jurisdictions, if others seek the same relief. Haynes  
12 and Boone admits the fact-intensive nature of these suits when it states that it will seek a  
13 determination that the Howrey partners in fact waived the right to unfinished business claims prior  
14 to the Jewel Waiver. *See* Dkt. No. 1087, at 14:7-14. Litigating this and other issues in multiple  
15 jurisdictions would be costly, duplicative, and carry a significant risk of inconsistent factual and  
16 legal determinations.  
17

18 The relief sought by Haynes and Boone contravenes the fundamental goal of the  
19 Bankruptcy Code to centralize proceedings in a single court. *See Armco Fin. Servcs. Corp. v.*  
20 *North Atlantic Ins. Co.*, 229 B.R. 90, 96 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 1999). The resulting delay and  
21 substantial additional costs would only prolong this case and deplete the limited assets of the  
22 estate that could otherwise provide a return to Howrey’s creditors.  
23

#### 24 **The Motion Ignores the Best Interest of the Creditors**

25 Absent from the Motion is any consideration of the best interest of Howrey’s creditors.  
26 Haynes and Boone’s attempt to fragment the case serves only the former partners and the large  
27 law firms that happily took them (and their portable business) in after Howrey’s demise. The  
28

1 creditors would bear the expense and delay resulting from such relief. There is no cause to  
2 accommodate the litigation strategy of well compensated law firm partners, and large  
3 sophisticated law firms, at the expense of the former employees, trade creditors and landlords who  
4 comprise the unsecured creditors of this estate.  
5

### 6 **Conclusion**

7 For the foregoing reasons, the Committee respectfully requests that the Court deny the  
8 Motion and grant any further relief that the Court deems just and proper.  
9

10 Dated: April 18, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

11 WHITEFORD TAYLOR AND PRESTON, LLP

12 By: /s/ Bradford F. Englander

13 Bradford F. Englander (Ca. Bar # 122108)

14 3190 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 300

Falls Church, Virginia 22042

15 (703) 280-9081

(703) 280-3370 (facsimile)

16 E-mail: [benglander@wtplaw.com](mailto:benglander@wtplaw.com)

17 *Attorneys for the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors*  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

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27  
28

**PROOF OF SERVICE**

I, Rebekah R. Odom, declare:

I am a resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia and over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to the within action; my business address is 3190 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 300, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. On April 18, 2013, I served the foregoing *Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors' Joinder to Chapter 11 Trustee's Opposition to Motion of Haynes and Boone, LLP*.

  x   (CM/ECF) The document was electronically served on the parties to this action via the mandatory United States Bankruptcy Court of California CM/ECF system upon filing of above described document.

SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST

  x   (ELECTRONIC MAIL SERVICE) By electronic mail (e-mail) the above listed document(s) without error to the email address(es) set forth below on this date.

SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST

  x   (UNITED STATES MAIL) By depositing a copy of the above-referenced documents for mailing in the United State Mail, first class postage prepaid, at Falls Church, Virginia, to the parties listed on Exhibit A attached hereto, at their last known mailing addresses, on April 18, 2013.

SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST

I am employed in the office of a member of the bar of this court at whose direction the service was made.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on April 18, 2013, at Falls Church, Virginia.

/s/ Rebekah R. Odom  
Rebekah R. Odom

1 **Via Email:**

2 **Office of the U.S. Trustee**

3 Minnie Loo  
4 Office of the U.S. Trustee  
5 235 Pine St. 7th Floor  
6 San Francisco, CA 94104-3484  
7 [minnie.loo@usdoj.gov](mailto:minnie.loo@usdoj.gov)  
8 [Donna.S.Tamanaha@usdoj.gov](mailto:Donna.S.Tamanaha@usdoj.gov)

8 **Trustee**

9 Allan B. Diamond  
10 Diamond McCarthy, LLP  
11 Two Houston Center  
12 909 Fannin Street, 15th Floor  
13 Houston, Texas 77010  
14 [adiamond@diamondmccarthy.com](mailto:adiamond@diamondmccarthy.com)

13 - and –

15 Howard D. Ressler, Esq.  
16 *Email:* [hressler@diamondmccarthy.com](mailto:hressler@diamondmccarthy.com)  
17 Stephen T. Loden, Esq.  
18 *Email:* [sloden@diamondmccarthy.com](mailto:sloden@diamondmccarthy.com)  
19 Jason M. Rudd, Esq.  
20 *Email:* [jrudd@diamondmccarthy.com](mailto:jrudd@diamondmccarthy.com)

19 **Kornfield Nyberg Bender & Kuhner P.C.**

20 Eric Nyberg  
21 *Email:* [e.nyberg@kornfieldlaw.com](mailto:e.nyberg@kornfieldlaw.com)  
22 Chris D. Kuhner  
23 *Email:* [c.kuhner@kornfieldlaw.com](mailto:c.kuhner@kornfieldlaw.com)

23 **Counsel to the Debtor**

24 Counsel to the Debtor  
25 Robert A. Franklin/Craig M. Prim  
26 Jenny L. Fountain  
27 Law Offices of Murray and Murray  
28 19400 Stevens Creek Blvd #200  
Cupertino, CA 95014-2548  
[cprim@murraylaw.com](mailto:cprim@murraylaw.com)  
[rfranklin@murraylaw.com](mailto:rfranklin@murraylaw.com)

1 [jlountain@murraylaw.com](mailto:jlountain@murraylaw.com)

2 Counsel to the Debtor  
3 Dylan G. Trache  
4 Wiley Rein LLP  
5 7925 Jones Branch Dr. #6200  
6 McLean, VA 22102  
7 [dtrache@wileyrein.com](mailto:dtrache@wileyrein.com)

8 Counsel to the Debtor  
9 H. Jason Gold  
10 Wiley Rein LLP  
11 1776 K Street, N.W.  
12 Washington, DC 20006  
13 [jgold@wileyrein.com](mailto:jgold@wileyrein.com)

14 Counsel to the Debtor  
15 Valerie P. Morrison  
16 Wiley Rein LLP  
17 7925 Jones Branch Dr. #6200  
18 McLean, VA 22102  
19 [vmorrison@wileyrein.com](mailto:vmorrison@wileyrein.com)

20 **Law Offices of Latham & Watkins**

21 Kimberly A. Posin, Esq.  
22 *Email:* [kim.posin@lw.com](mailto:kim.posin@lw.com)

23 Counsel to Citibank, N.A.  
24 Paul Weiss  
25 1285 Avenue of the Americas  
26 New York, NY 10019-6064  
27 [kcornish@paulweiss.com](mailto:kcornish@paulweiss.com)  
28 [dmeyers@paulweiss.com](mailto:dmeyers@paulweiss.com)  
[jadlerstein@paulweiss.com](mailto:jadlerstein@paulweiss.com)

29 Counsel to Citibank, N.A.  
30 Scott H. McNutt  
31 McNutt Law Group  
32 188 The Embarcadero #800  
33 San Francisco, CA 94105  
34 [SMcNutt@ml-sf.com](mailto:SMcNutt@ml-sf.com)

35 Counsel to Protiviti, Inc.  
36 John D. Fiero  
37 Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP  
38 150 California Street, 15th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94111-4500  
Telephone: 415/263-7000  
Facsimile: 415/263-7010  
Email: [jfiero@pszjlaw.com](mailto:jfiero@pszjlaw.com)

## COMMITTEE OF UNSECURED CREDITORS

Stephanie Y. Langley  
c/o James D. Wood  
Offices of James D. Wood  
3675 Mount Diablo Blvd., Suite 250  
Lafayette, CA 94549-3775  
[jdwood@jdwoodlaw.com](mailto:jdwood@jdwoodlaw.com)

Dun & Bradstreet  
c/o Receivable Management Services  
Attn: Steven Sass/Ronald Rowland  
307 International Circle, Suite 270  
Hunt Valley, MD 21030  
[steven.sass@rmsna.com](mailto:steven.sass@rmsna.com);  
[Ronald.rowland@rmsna.com](mailto:Ronald.rowland@rmsna.com)

Stephanie Y. Langley  
c/o Jack A. Raisner/ Rene S. Roupinian  
Outten & Golden LLP  
3 Park Avenue  
New York NY 10016  
[jar@outtengolden.com](mailto:jar@outtengolden.com);  
[rsr@outtengolden.com](mailto:rsr@outtengolden.com)

EMC Corporation  
c/o Receivable Management Services  
Attn: Steven Sass/Ronald Rowland  
307 International Circle, Suite 270  
Hunt Valley, MD 21030  
[steven.sass@rmsna.com](mailto:steven.sass@rmsna.com);  
[Ronald.rowland@rmsna.com](mailto:Ronald.rowland@rmsna.com)

Matura Farrington Staffing Svs. Inc.  
Attn: Karen Farrington  
700 South Flower Street, Suite 2505  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
[Karen@matfar.com](mailto:Karen@matfar.com)

Matura Farrington Staffing Svs., Inc.



1 c/o Wondie Russell  
2 Law Offices Of Wondie Russell  
3 465 Roosevelt Way  
4 San Francisco, CA 94114  
5 Telephone: (415) 626-3906  
6 Email: [wondie.russell@yahoo.com](mailto:wondie.russell@yahoo.com)

7 Stephanie Y Langley  
8 13665 Legacy Circle, Apt. C  
9 Herndon, VA 20171  
10 [sylang22@gmail.com](mailto:sylang22@gmail.com)

11 **PARTIES REQUESTING SPECIAL NOTICE**

12 John H. MacConaghy  
13 Monique Jewett-Brewster  
14 MacConaghy & Barnier, PLC  
15 645 First Street West  
16 Sonoma, CA 95476  
17 [macclaw@macbarlaw.com](mailto:macclaw@macbarlaw.com);  
18 [mjewett-brewster@macbarlaw.com](mailto:mjewett-brewster@macbarlaw.com)

19 200 S. Main Street Investors, LLC  
20 Attn: Matthew Moncur  
21 c/o Ballard Spahr LLP  
22 201 South Main Street  
23 One Utah Center, Suite 800  
24 Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2221  
25 [Moncurm@ballardspahr.com](mailto:Moncurm@ballardspahr.com)  
26 [WinthropR@ballardspahr.com](mailto:WinthropR@ballardspahr.com)  
27 [Costap@ballardspahr.com](mailto:Costap@ballardspahr.com)

28 S. Christian Mullgardt, Sr. Counsel  
Olin Corporation  
190 Carondelet Plaza, Suite 1530  
Clayton, MO 63105  
[scmullgardt@olin.com](mailto:scmullgardt@olin.com)

Oracle America, Inc.  
c/o Shawn M. Christianson  
Buchalter Nemer A PC  
333 Market Street, 25th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2126  
[schristianson@buchalter.com](mailto:schristianson@buchalter.com)

Knickerbocker Properties, Inc. XXXIII

1 c/o Scott H. Olson  
2 Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
3 560 Mission Street, Suite 3100  
4 San Francisco, CA 94105  
5 [solson@seyfarth.com](mailto:solson@seyfarth.com)

6 Knickerbocker Properties, Inc. XXXIII  
7 c/o Thomas J. Masenga  
8 Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
9 333 S. Hope Street, Suite 3900  
10 Los Angeles, CA 90017  
11 [tmasenga@seyfarth.com](mailto:tmasenga@seyfarth.com)  
12 [rmjohnson@seyfarth.com](mailto:rmjohnson@seyfarth.com)

13 Belkys Escobar  
14 Assistant County Attorney  
15 County of Loudoun  
16 One Harrison Street, SE 5th Floor  
17 (MSC#06)  
18 Leesburg, VA 20175-3102  
19 [Belkys.escobar@loudoun.gov](mailto:Belkys.escobar@loudoun.gov)

20 Pension Benefit Guaranty  
21 Corporation  
22 c/o Lawrence Landgraff  
23 Office of the Chief Counsel  
24 1200 K Street, NW  
25 Washington, DC 20005  
26 [Landgraff.larry@pbgc.gov](mailto:Landgraff.larry@pbgc.gov)  
27 [efile@pbgc.gov](mailto:efile@pbgc.gov)

28 Banc of America Leasing & Capital  
LLC  
c/o Mark A. Serlin  
Serlin & Whiteford LLP  
700 E Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[mserlin@globelaw.com](mailto:mserlin@globelaw.com)

Attorneys' Liability Assurance Society  
c/o Alan D. Smith  
Perkins Coie LLP  
1201 3rd Avenue, Suite 4800  
Seattle, WA 98101  
[adsmith@perkinscoie.com](mailto:adsmith@perkinscoie.com)  
[dgold@perkinscoie.com](mailto:dgold@perkinscoie.com)

1 The Irvine Company LLC  
2 c/o Michael S. Greger  
3 Allen Matkins Leck Gamble et al.  
4 1900 Main Street, Fifth Floor  
5 Irvine, CA 92614-7321

6 [mgreger@allenmatkins.com](mailto:mgreger@allenmatkins.com)  
7 William W. Huckins  
8 [whuckins@allenmatkins.com](mailto:whuckins@allenmatkins.com)

9 Duane Morris LLP  
10 Geoffrey A. Heaton, Esq.  
11 [gheaton@duanemorris.com](mailto:gheaton@duanemorris.com)  
12 Aron M. Oiner, Esq.  
13 [roliner@duanemorris.com](mailto:roliner@duanemorris.com)

14 Trepel McGrane Greenfield LLP  
15 Maureen A. Harrington, Esq.  
16 [mharrington@tmcglaw.com](mailto:mharrington@tmcglaw.com)  
17 Christopher D. Sullivan, Esq.  
18 [csullivan@tgsdlaw.com](mailto:csullivan@tgsdlaw.com)

19 Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps  
20 Michael A. Isaacs, Esq.  
21 [misaacs@luce.com](mailto:misaacs@luce.com)  
22 [gkleiner@luce.com](mailto:gkleiner@luce.com)

23 Dewey and LeBoeuf  
24 Paul S. Jasper, Esq.  
25 [pjasper@dl.com](mailto:pjasper@dl.com)

26 Bartlett, Hackett and Feinberg  
27 Frank F. McGinn, Esq.  
28 [ffm@bostonbusinesslaw.com](mailto:ffm@bostonbusinesslaw.com)

DLA Piper LLP  
Frank T. Pepler, Esq.  
[frank.pepler@dlapiper.com](mailto:frank.pepler@dlapiper.com)

Schnader Harrison Segal and Lewis  
Melissa Lor, Esq.  
[MLor@Schnader.com](mailto:MLor@Schnader.com)

McGrane LLP  
William McGrane, Esq.  
[William.mcgrane@mcgranellp.com](mailto:William.mcgrane@mcgranellp.com)

1 Texas Comptroller of Public Accountants  
2 Bankruptcy & Collections Division  
3 Kimberly Walsh, Esq.  
4 [bk-kwalsh@oag.state.tx.us](mailto:bk-kwalsh@oag.state.tx.us)

5 Jones Day  
6 Robert A. Trodella  
7 [rtrodella@jonesday.com](mailto:rtrodella@jonesday.com)

8 Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson LLP  
9 John P. Dillman  
10 [Houston\\_bankruptcy@lgbs.com](mailto:Houston_bankruptcy@lgbs.com)

11 Dumas & Clark LLP  
12 Cecily A. Dumas  
13 [Cecily.dumas@dumasclark.com](mailto:Cecily.dumas@dumasclark.com)  
14 Robert E. Clark  
15 [Robert.clark@dumasclark.com](mailto:Robert.clark@dumasclark.com)

16 **Via U.S. Mail:**

17 Richard Burdge, Esq.  
18 The Burdge Law Firm PC  
19 500 S Grand Ave Ste 1500  
20 Los Angeles, CA 90071

21 Jeffrey C. Wisler, Esq.  
22 Connolly Bove Lodge & Hutz LLP  
23 1007 North Orange Street  
24 Wilmington, DE 19899

25 IKON Office Solutions  
26 Recovery & Bankruptcy Group  
27 3920 Arkwright Road, Suite 400  
28 Macon, GA 31210

EMC Corporation  
c/o RMS Bankruptcy Recovery Services  
Attn: President or General/Managing Agent  
P.O. Box 5126  
Timonium, MD 21094-5126

Salter & Company LLC  
4600 East-West Highway, Suite 300  
Bethesda, MD 20814

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
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13  
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24  
25  
26  
27  
28

County of Loudoun Virginia  
Belkys Escobar  
1 Harrison St., S.E. 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Leesburg, VA 20175-3102

Matura Farrington Staffing Services, Inc.  
700 So. Flower Street, Suite 2505  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Guy Davis  
Protiviti Inc.  
1051 East Cary Street, Suite 602  
Richmond, VA 23219

George E. Shoup, III  
Development Specialists, Inc.  
6375 Riverside Drive, Suite 200  
Dublin, OH 43017-5373

Kyle Everett  
Development Specialists, Inc.  
235 Pine Street, Suite 1150  
San Francisco, CA 94104